



Program Dispatch

First Edition, Fiscal Year 2010-2011



Senior Services

**Mental Health Services Act Dollars
Working in the Community!**

Service Goals

The objectives of Agewise Senior Services are:

- **Facilitate 24/7 access and extend services** to diverse populations of older adults not currently receiving mental health services
- **Provide ongoing** linkage and consultation related to SSI benefits and other entitlements
- **Expand the Senior Peer Counseling** program countywide
- **Provide in-home supportive senior peer counseling** to those suffering from situational difficulties related to aging and mental health issues
- **Facilitate support groups** for consumer families, and caregivers
- **Provide outreach and engagement services** to older adults
- **Provide mobile crisis response** and crisis prevention to older adults in the community and hospitals
- **Increase access** to care, treatment and resources
- Assist in **helping older adults maintain independence** in the community

Why was Agewise created?

Older adults face many challenges, which sometimes makes it hard for them to get the help they need. Many seniors are spread out across the county where community services and transportation are very limited, and many seniors are isolated in their own homes, while some have been abandoned by their families altogether. The Agewise program was created to address these and other important issues and to ensure that older adults have access to treatment, case management and above all, a listening ear.

The Agewise team works in tandem with other county departments and community agencies to assist seniors be happy and healthy in their own homes. The Agewise team accomplishes this through one-on-one services focused on integrity and respect for the aging process.

Some of the specific ways in which we partner with seniors include:

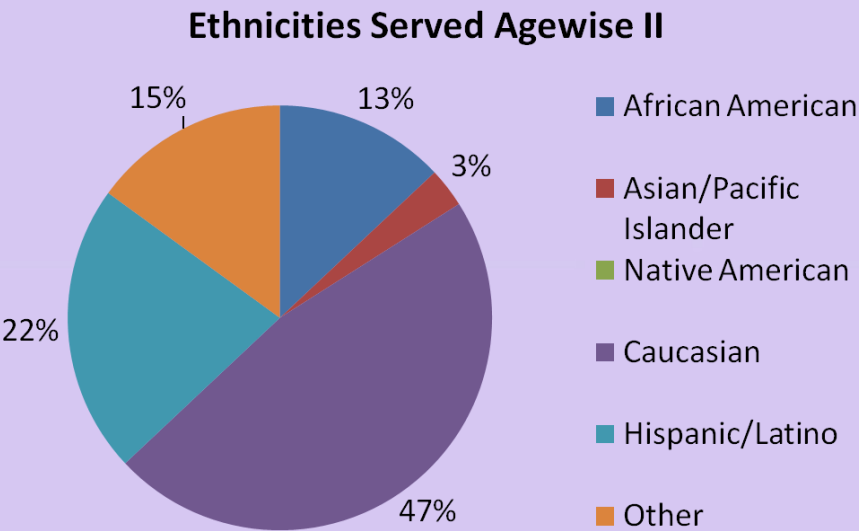
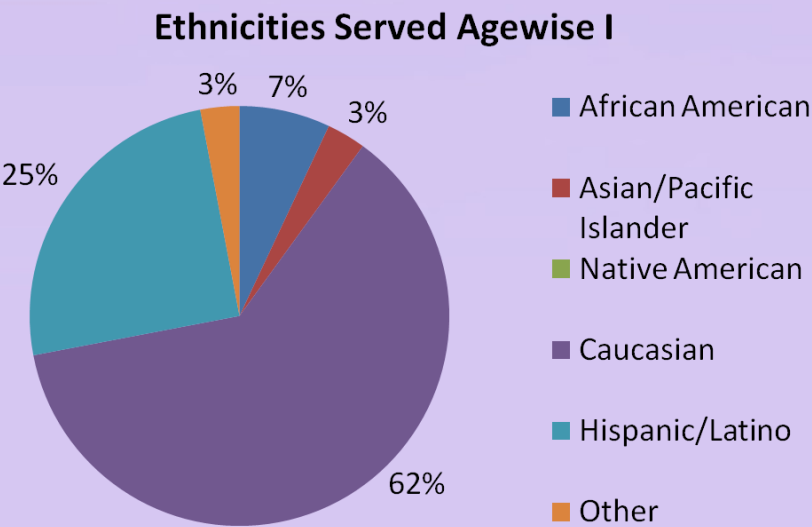
- Assistance with filling out forms and applications
- Finding appropriate housing to meet their needs
- Getting seniors to medical or mental health appointments
- Grocery shopping and assisting in balancing their budgets
- Linking seniors with senior centers or older adult community groups
- Counseling to deal with the loss of loved ones
- Counseling to address alcoholism or drug use
- Providing information and assistance for friends and family members
- Helping seniors find resources to cover household needs
- Accompanying seniors to important appointments
- Helping seniors access vision and dental care



Positive Results

- Enabled older adults to remain out of psychiatric hospitals and jails
- Decreased frequency of emergency room visits for mental health or substance abuse needs
- Helped older adults access Social Security and other federal and state benefits
- Provided counseling for the grief and loss of a loved spouse or partner
- Decreased the number of older adults who are homeless, or run the risk of becoming homeless

Program Data



Making A Difference

A 60 year old female, who currently resides in Big Bear was chronically depressed and suicidal due to the loss of her husband. She received therapy on a weekly basis as well as having the opportunity to call if she was in a crisis mode. She also received intensive case management in order for her to have her needs met such as food for her and her dog. Agewise staff were able to help her maneuver through the Social Security system in order to receive benefits which helped her keep her home. With the help of DBH she was linked to a low income mental health clinic in Big Bear where she could receive services close to home. She said "your program saved my life, all I could think of was dying, thank you." Her quality of life continues to improve day by day.

Challenges

- Accessing homeless clients can sometimes be difficult in areas such as parks, river washes and under bridges
- The target population of older adults with mental illness/co-occurring disorders are often paranoid regarding receiving services and their relationship to the government
- Addressing the stigma of behavioral health services so that the program, which is new to the area, continues to be recognized by the community
- Due to economic fears and concerns about cutbacks for older adult benefits there has been an increase in resource requests such as intensive case management and mobile services

Solutions in Progress

- Support education and sharing of knowledge to community members and their families about navigating the behavioral health system and understanding older adult issues.
- Increased access to care through quick mobile response teams.
- Reduce anxiety by providing services in the home rather than a clinic.
- Outreach to the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) older adults in the communities by providing services that are sensitive to their needs.
- Improve housing and employment resources through mobile response teams, full service partnerships and intensive case management services.



- Assist older adults in accessing Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) shelter system and DBH housing services.
- Developed employment services to increase the number of older adults employed.

For information regarding services please call:

ACCESS UNIT

(888) 743-1478 or (888) 743-1481 (TTY)

Dial 2-1-1 to get information and referrals for health and social services.
Get connected with a live operator 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Collaborative Partners

The Agewise Program thanks all partners in serving older adults!

Department of Aging
and Adult Services

Adult Protective Services

In-home Support Services

Public Guardians

DBH Clinics